



## *The Puffins Club*

### ***Dacorum Sports Club for Adults with Learning Disabilities***

#### ***SAFEGUARDING POLICY***

Last updated	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
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#### **Policy Statement**

**The Puffins Club** routinely interacts with vulnerable adults and will also from time to time interact with children (people under 18 years of age), students and young people as volunteers, often, though not always taking part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. In doing so **The Puffins Club** recognises its responsibility in protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse and safeguarding their welfare. All children, young people and vulnerable adults who come into contact with our volunteers and trustees of **The Puffins Club** can expect to be treated with respect and afforded an appropriate level of protection. The safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount. During our regular sessions or when visiting other sites we will endeavour to seek assurance from those with whom we work that they have taken all reasonable steps to ensure this. We expect them to:

- Recognise that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to freedom from abuse.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are carefully selected and checked to the highest level possible.
- Adopt a Safer staff/volunteer recruitment policy
- That a risk assessment of any premises they use is done.
- That staff and volunteers are adequately trained to respond swiftly to any suspicions or allegations of abuse.
- Appoint a child safeguarding/vulnerable adults officer to take responsibility for safety and act appropriately and confidentially when dealing with protection issues. Make sure all staff and volunteers know exactly who the child safeguarding/vulnerable adults' officer is.

- Have a professional contact list including the local police station and social services.
- Have a child safeguarding/vulnerable adults policy that shows this commitment.

**The Puffins Club** is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We believe:-

- That the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults should always be of paramount importance, whatever the circumstances.
- That everyone who may be involved with children, young people or vulnerable adults has a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse.
- Special care is needed in dealing with children, young people or vulnerable adults whose age, inexperience or physical state makes them particularly vulnerable to abuse.
- Where appropriate sufficient training must be made available to staff and volunteers to provide them with the necessary knowledge to ensure safe care is always maintained.

## **Policy**

### **Types of Abuse**

#### ***Physical Abuse***

May involve, hitting, shaking; throwing; poisoning; burning; scalding; drowning; suffocating; female genital mutilation (FGM); or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a carer/parent fabricates symptoms or deliberately induces illness in a child/vulnerable adult.

#### ***Sexual Abuse***

Involves forcing or enticing a child/vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child/vulnerable adult are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non penetrative acts. They may include noncontact activities such as involving children/vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### ***Emotional/Psychological Abuse***

The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child/vulnerable adults such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's/vulnerable adult's emotional development.

It may involve:

- Telling a child/vulnerable adult they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- Valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child/vulnerable adult.
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- A child/vulnerable adult seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another
- Bullying or harassment
- Causing a child/vulnerable adult to frequently feel frightened or in danger
- Exploitation or corruption of a child/vulnerable adult.

### ***Neglect or acts of omission***

Persistent failure to meet a child's/vulnerable adult's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health and development. Neglect may occur:

- During pregnancy as a result of substance abuse
- Failure to provide adequate food and clothing
- Failing to provide shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment
- Failing to protect a child/vulnerable adult from physical harm or danger
- Failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Repeated incidents of poor professional practice or neglect.
- Inflexible services based on the needs of the providers rather than the person requiring the service.

### ***Discriminatory Abuse***

Discriminatory Abuse includes age, race, religious/belief, gender and sexist abuse, plus abuse based on a person's disability, favouring, acting upon personal prejudices and lack of access or individuality

### ***Financial Abuse or Material Abuse***

Financial and material abuse means unauthorised and improper use of funds, property or any resources of a vulnerable person. Misappropriating money,

valuables or property, forcing will changes and denying rightful access to personal funds, arranging less care than is needed to save money to maximise inheritance, denying access to benefits, someone moving into a person's home and living rent free without agreement or under duress and volunteers taking a loan from a person using the service.

### ***Modern Day Slavery***

Human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation such as escort work and prostitution and debt bondage.

### ***Organisational or Institutional Abuse***

This may be shown by discouraging visits or the involvement of relatives or friends, lack of leadership and supervision, lack of respect for dignity and privacy, misuse of medication, abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service.

### ***Domestic Violence or Abuse***

This can be characterised by a number of indicators of abuse such as psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional suffering.

### ***Self Neglect***

Lack of self care to an extent that it threatens personal health and safety e.g. hoarding, neglecting household maintenance and failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs.

In respect of safeguarding individuals from radicalisation/extremism, The Puffins Club recognises that radicalisation can occur to any individual from any community and is not particular to any ethnic, social or racial group. There are no definitive indicators that an individual is vulnerable to radicalisation but there are a number of signs that together can increase the risk. Signs of vulnerability include:-

- Social exclusion
- Religious conversion
- Change in behaviour
- Poverty
- Being in possession of extremist literature
- Global or national events
- Confused identity
- Online searching or sharing of extremist messages

- Intolerance of difference – faith, gender, race, sexuality
- Advocating violence towards others

**The Puffins Club** is committed to supporting the Prevent element of the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy, and will continue to champion British Values through all services and activities. We will use our best endeavours to recognise signs of radicalisation.

Anyone working for or on behalf of **The Puffins Club** must refer all concerns about Individuals, whether members or volunteers, who show signs of radicalisation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where there are significant concerns about an individual, the Designated Safeguarding Lead in liaison with the Chair or Secretary will make a referral to the Hertfordshire Police safeguarding adults from abuse team (SAFA). The referral will then be forwarded to the Channel co-ordinator and the Channel protocol will then be followed.

#### **What should you do if you suspect abuse is taking place?**

**The Puffins Club** will respond promptly to any concerns expressed by a volunteer about a child or vulnerable adult. **The Puffins Club** has a designated safeguarding person who takes responsibility for issues relating to child and vulnerable adults safeguarding. It is not the responsibility of the volunteer in attendance to investigate or make a decision as to whether or not abuse has taken place. There is however a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. It is very important that any concerns on a child's or vulnerable adult's safety are logged by the volunteer in attendance and then reported directly by them to the designated safeguarding person for action.

#### **What to do if a child, young person or adult makes a safeguarding disclosure**

When responding to safeguarding disclosures made by children, young people, or adults, **The Puffins Club** volunteers should:-

- Give the discloser their full attention and keep their body language open and encouraging.
- Stay calm and take their time – letting the discloser go at their own pace.
- Assure the discloser that they will be taken seriously.
- Not promise confidentiality.

- Avoid asking leading questions or making promises that can't be kept. Use questions to clarify e.g. TED – tell me more, explain, describe.
- With the discloser summarise what has been said to ensure it is accurate.
- Record details of the disclosure promptly including date, time, location and what had been said.
- Handle safeguarding information confidentially and share it only with authorised individuals or agencies involved in the safeguarding process or as required by law.
- Follow **The Puffins Club** safeguarding reporting procedures and report it straight away to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is **Carolyn Doe**.

The role is to:

- Ensure the organisation's Safeguarding Children/Vulnerable Adult Policy and Procedures are implemented and updated as required.
- Ensure they know how to make contact with social care and police both during and after office hours.
- Report any concerns to social care or the police. Urgent concerns should be reported immediately by those aware of them even if the designated person is not available, and it is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer to ensure all staff and volunteers know how to do this.
- Act as a source of advice on all safeguarding children/vulnerable adult matters.
- Ensure that a record is kept of any concerns about a child or adult and of any conversation or referrals to statutory agencies.
- Ensure that any such record is kept safely and securely

### **Staff and volunteer selection and training**

**The Puffins Club** will take all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from volunteering to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. New applicants for such posts will be required to work a probation period not

less than three months, and required to give consent for an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Volunteers will not be permitted to work unsupervised with children, young people or vulnerable adults until the appropriate references/disclosures have been obtained. All personal data will be processed and stored in accordance with **The Puffins Club** Data Protection Policy and GDPR requirements.

### **Recruitment Procedure for Staff and Volunteers**

The aim of any process of selecting staff and volunteers is to make sure people are suitable for the role and understand what is expected of them. Where a role involves working with children/vulnerable adults **The Puffins Club** uses the following recruitment procedure:

1. The whole interview and selection process is completed BEFORE any staff and/or volunteers take up their duties.
2. Job descriptions and person specifications are prepared for all volunteers. These make clear what personal qualities are required specific to the role and are given to anyone interested so they can see what will be required.
3. There will always be a minimum of two people on an interview panel. This usually includes at least one member of the trustees and another committee member.
4. All volunteers are required to fill in an application form. They will be required to provide, at least, two referees who can vouch for their character and suitability to be in a position of responsibility for children/vulnerable adults.
5. Short listing of candidates is done in line with the person specification and shortlisted candidates will then be interviewed.
6. If a person is thought to be suitable for the role they will be asked to complete a DBS application form and their identity checked.
7. Once DBS clearance is obtained, if there are no adverse reports the person can start their duties. As an integral part of their induction they will be encouraged to read all **The Puffins Club** policies which are available on the **The Puffins Club** website.
8. If a DBS disclosure reveals a criminal record that would not automatically ban the person from working with vulnerable adults or children but causes concern, **The Puffins Club** will discuss the offence with the applicant and take into consideration the circumstances of the offence,

type of offence, when committed, pattern etc and assess fairly thus ensuring fair appointment and selection.

9. The Designated Safeguarding Person will meet with the person to explain their duties and any key points from the code of conduct specific to their role.
10. All staff and volunteers will serve a probationary period, and there will be a two-way meeting halfway through this period. This meeting should be a positive experience with a chance to discuss areas for development.

### **Code of conduct for all staff and volunteers**

Always remember that while you are working with children/vulnerable adults you are in a position of trust and your responsibilities to them and Community Action Dacorum must be uppermost in your mind at all times. Where appropriate, volunteers will receive information and basic training in safe conduct and what to do if they have concerns about a child/vulnerable adult.

#### **Do Not:**

- Use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking or hitting
- Smoke in front of any child/vulnerable adult
- Use non prescribed drugs or be under the influence of alcohol
- Behave in a way that frightens or demeans any child/vulnerable adult
- Use any racist, sexist, discriminatory or offensive language
- Invite a child/vulnerable adults to your home or arrange to see them outside the set activity times
- Engage in any sexual activity (this would include using sexualised language) with a child/vulnerable adult you meet through your duties or start a personal relationship with them, this would be an abuse of trust
- Engage in rough or physical games, including horseplay
- Let allegations a child/vulnerable adult makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Rely upon good nature to protect you or believe "it could never happen to me"
- Give children/vulnerable adults presents or personal items

#### **Do:**

- Exercise caution about being alone with a child/vulnerable adult.
- Ensure that any physical contact is open and initiated by the child's/vulnerable adults needs
- Talk explicitly to children/vulnerable adults about their right to be kept safe from harm



- Listen to them and take every opportunity to raise their self esteem
- Work as a team with your co-volunteers. Agree with them what behaviour you expect and be consistent in enforcing it.
- Make sure you have read the Safeguarding Children/vulnerable adults Procedure and Policy and that you feel confident that you know how to recognise when a child/vulnerable adult may be suffering harm, how to handle any disclosure and how to report any concerns.
- Seek advice and support from your colleagues and your designated safeguarding officer for safeguarding children/vulnerable adults.
- Be clear with anyone disclosing any matter that could concern the safety and well-being of a child/vulnerable adult that you cannot guarantee to keep this information to yourself
- Seek opportunities for training
- Make sure you are familiar with **The Puffins Club** confidentiality policy.

### **Visitors**

Visitors are made aware of our Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy and are given information about what to do if they are concerned about any aspect of a child's or vulnerable adult's welfare. When visitors are invited to speak to volunteers we undertake due diligence to ensure that visiting speakers are appropriate.

### **Role and Responsibilities**

Staff and volunteers must remember it is the policy of **The Puffins Club** to keep "no secrets" where safeguarding is concerned.

If you have any concerns regarding the safety/wellbeing of any children, young people or vulnerable adults you are working with on behalf of **The Puffins Club**, or a child/young person or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure to you, you must follow the safeguarding procedure as described below.

#### **STAGE 1**

**It is your duty of care to make sure that the child/young person/vulnerable adult is safe. Ensure that the person knows that they are safe at the moment and check that the person is as safe as possible.**

**Do not start an investigation**

**If the person is in immediate danger or needs immediate medical attention you must call the police or an ambulance at this point**

### STAGE 2

All volunteers are duty bound to report any allegations/suspensions of abuse or threatened abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. All staff must record all relevant information. Once reported it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Person for the continuing safety and well-being of the child/young adult/vulnerable adult.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Carolyn Doe 01442 82 4427

### STAGE 3

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to make the referral to the appropriate outside agency

Child Safeguarding Concern Hertfordshire County Council 0300 123 4043  
Vulnerable Adult Concern Adult Care Services Adult Protection 0300 123 4042  
or 0800 6444 101 (if adult at risk is known to be receiving mental health services)

Local Police  
0845 330 0222

Non emergency  
101

Emergency  
999

### STAGE 4

The case responsibility now rests with the external agency to which the initial referral was made. There may be a requirement for further involvement from *The Puffins Club* but this is dependent upon the course of action decided upon by the external agency.

If the Designated Safeguarding Person is not available, you should work your way down the list until you speak to someone to report your concerns. At any stage please ensure that a member of staff is aware of the situation as soon as possible.

### Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and if necessary, more frequently in line with changes in legislation and guidance on the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults and any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children, young people or vulnerable adults in *The Puffins Club*.

## **Legislation**

**The Puffins Club's** commitment to safeguarding vulnerable adults and children is underpinned by its legal obligation to provide volunteer placements without discrimination under the following pieces of legislation.

- Sexual Offence Act 2003
- Children's Act 2004
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Disclosure and Barring Service 2013
- Care Act 2014
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015